

sums, and for several years past to between \$30,000 and \$41,000 annually; exclusive of the supplies of materials for its manufactures, which amounted last year to no less than the sum of \$88,000. The greater part of these large expenditures have been circulated among the mechanics, manufacturers, merchants and other industrious classes of this city.

Can any candid man deny that the expenditures of such large sums of money is a great *benefit* to the mechanics, laborers, and other classes of this community, far beyond any *injury* that can possibly arise to any class of them from the *competition* of Penitentiary labor, even admitting that the competition was actually injurious to the extent alleged? Nor can it be doubted, that if the Penitentiary establishment were to be removed from this city, it would be deprecated as a loss to Baltimore, and considered as an important advantage to the citizens of the place at which it might be located. It is true that the benefit arising from these expenditures is chiefly confined to the city of Baltimore, and is very little participated in by the State at large, upon whom the tax of supporting the Penitentiary must fall, in the event of the labors of the prisoner becoming insufficient.

We think, then, it must appear that the labor of the Penitentiary does *not*, in the *smallest degree*, operate to the disadvantage of the mechanics and artizans of this city; but, on the contrary, that all classes of our citizens are more or less, directly or indirectly, *benefitted* by it;—but, were it otherwise, does that afford an adequate reason for abolishing it? Should not the great consideration be, in this case, as in all others, *the public good*? Does it afford an adequate reason for stopping the labor of the Penitentiary, or directing it into unprofitable employment, if it were true that a small portion of the city of Baltimore is injured by its operations, when the rest of the city and the state is benefitted, and the whole saved from taxation? Should, on that account, the burden of supporting four hundred criminals be thrown upon the state, by the levy of a tax of forty thousand dollars annually, to be attended with the further miserable effect of keeping such a number of human beings in idleness, to the exclusion of all hope of reformation, and victims to disease and death, as the necessary consequence of confinement without labor?

It is not necessary to enter into the general principles of humanity, morality and political economy, in which the Penitentiary system had its origin in another state, and came to be introduced into this.—These are, however, after all, by far the most legitimate and important considerations of the subject, and the only true grounds upon which the system is to be condemned or justified. It is not to be judged by the mere comparative good or evil which the labor of the convict may effect, in a pecuniary point of view. No enlightened citizen can be indifferent to the attainment of the most effectual mode of punishing and reclaiming those of our fellow creatures who offend against the laws—an object which has so long occupied the heads and